

The logo features the word "WINCHESTER" in a small, yellow, sans-serif font at the top left. Below it, the words "MISSION" and "ACTION" are stacked in a large, bold, red, sans-serif font. A vertical red line runs through the center of the text, and a horizontal red line is positioned above the word "MISSION", together forming a cross shape.

WINCHESTER
**MISSION
ACTION**



Student Ambassadors: Representing students to the church and representing the character of Jesus to students.

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)

Background and Vision

The Diocese continues to face the challenge of missing generations in our churches. We have over 144,000 students in twenty-two FE & HE institutions but only around 2% of students estimated to participate in church (though in reality the number is probably much lower). While there are hubs of incredibly fruitful work with students blossoming around the Diocese these figures highlight the reality that the Church of England has failed to engage with students in a meaningful way as an organisation in recent years, both culturally and practically. This has meant that students often have no first-hand experience of what a life of genuine faith looks like.

Students are now also known to be the loneliest generation with around 10% of 16-24 year olds reporting feeling lonely “always or often” according to an ONS survey. Around 27% of students reporting that they suffer with mental health problems such as anxiety and depression according to a YouGov poll. This is the reality that has developed alongside dwindling church engagement.

As a Diocese, we believe that the Church has a part to play in changing this reality for students. We want to resource churches that have significant student populations living or studying within their parish. This includes some churches which are currently engaged with students practically, as well as some churches who currently have little to no student presence in their congregations. These churches will be asked to employ a Student Ambassador whose job will be to represent the culture and needs of students to the local church, and also to be a practical demonstration of a life of faith to young people in the parish. We want to see a Church who serves students well alongside representing Christ through their regular weekly activities.

Student Ambassadors

The role of the student ambassador has not existed within the local church before. Student Ambassadors are the front line of engagement with young people socially and spiritually. They are to be relentlessly present, enthusiastically available, openly authentic, and sacrificially Christ-like. They are not expected to be the head of a church ministry or an administrator of church discipleship groups, but rather to be based outside of the walls of the local church and rooted within the congregation. The student ambassadors are expected to act as a role model to current Christian students so that they too can join in the journey of engaging with student culture as a practicing Christian.

This may look slightly different depending on the context of the church they are based in and the student culture that has evolved locally. The Diocese is committed to offering training and networking opportunities for all student ambassadors to help them discover how to engage with students locally in a way which is both helpful and fruitful with help from individuals and organisations across the country who are meeting student needs and seeing a reversal of the current trends among students relating to social participation and belief. These roles are exciting as they allow the Church to be proactive in its response to culture, and to set a standard of engagement with students nationally.